

VZCZCXYZ0004
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHNR #0545/01 0761322
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 171322Z MAR 09
FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8869
INFO RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 0466
RUEHDR/AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM 6418
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 3202
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 3127
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 2992
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 5428

UNCLAS NAIROBI 000545

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF/E
LONDON, PARIS, ROME FOR AFRICA WATCHERS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [KE](#)
SUBJECT: KENYA: PROMOTING RECONCILIATION AND PUSHING ON THE
REFORM AGENDA IN NAKURU AND ELDORET

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED -- ENTIRE TEXT.

¶1. Summary: Promoting reconciliation in the wake of the post-election violence and pushing for implementation of the reform agenda are inter-related aspects of supporting democratic change in Kenya. As part of these efforts, a Mission team, headed by the Ambassador, recently visited Nakuru and Eldoret in Rift Valley. These places were epicenters of the post-election violence. Almost 40,000 remain internally displaced as a result of the clashes which occurred primarily between Kalenjins and Kikuyus. This was the Ambassador's seventh visit to Rift Valley over the past 14 months, and members of the Mission team have visited repeatedly to support ongoing U.S. efforts to promote reconciliation, to provide humanitarian support, and to engage with the population. End summary.

¶2. On February 28, the Ambassador attended the launch of a young adult & peace ambassadors program sponsored by a dynamic U.S. non-governmental organization called the Workforce Development Global Alliance (WDGA). The program has trained 500 young people from different ethnic groups to serve as peace ambassadors to promote reconciliation and conflict resolution within their communities. The Mission supported the program. The local member of parliament (Lee Kinyanjui, PNU), government representatives, and community leaders attended. In his remarks, which were covered by the media, the Ambassador made the point that all ethnic groups in Kenya are inter-dependent, as demonstrated by the fact that all have suffered by the negative economic consequences of the crisis. He urged senior leaders to communicate more directly with the people, pointing out that Kibaki and Odinga have only visited Rift Valley together once since the crisis. He discussed ongoing U.S. support for the internally displaced persons, reconciliation, and the reform agenda.

¶3. On March 1 the Ambassador attended a & sports for peace program organized by the international NGO CARE for several hundred young people of different ethnic groups. The program, headed by Dr. Auma Obama, has been holding similar events in other areas which experienced violence. In addition to participating in the sporting activities, the Ambassador met with representatives of 15 community-based organizations which helped organize the event. The organizations are run by young people, many of whom were directly affected by the post-election violence. Their presentations were encouraging in emphasizing that ethnic attitudes among young people are starting to shift based on a growing common perception that fundamental change is needed in Kenya (i.e. action against the culture of impunity). The

Ambassador agreed to explore ways in which the Mission can support efforts of the community-based organizations.

¶4. The Ambassador met separately with representatives of 20 organizations receiving support from the Office of Transition Initiatives, as part of the Mission's emergency intervention in the wake of the post-election violence. One participant commented that "people are watching and wondering where their leaders are taking them."⁸ Ethnic tensions remain alive, they emphasized. They are carrying out an impressive array of reconciliation programs and programs aimed at energizing Kenyans to push for implementation of the reform agenda. They enthusiastically welcomed the Ambassador's proposal for sponsorship of a series of town hall meetings around the country in order to give the Kenyan people a means of speaking out peacefully.

¶5. Finally, the Ambassador and team visited a reconciliation project sponsored by the Catholic Bishop of Eldoret. Bishop Korir, a Kalenjin, has made sincere efforts to bridge differences between the Kalenjin and Kikuyu communities. For example, he sheltered thousands of Kikuyus in the cathedral grounds during the violence last year. He is widely respected for these efforts, although some Kalenjin hardliners in particular have publicly criticized him for being, in their view, excessively pro-Kikuyu and therefore a traitor to his native community. The Ambassador spoke to Kalenjin and Kikuyu youth and elders whom the Bishop has organized to build a road between their rural communities (with U.S. support through Catholic Relief Services). The community expressed appreciation for the road itself, as well as for the constructive opportunity its construction presented for youth to be positively involved in the

reconciliation process. However, some elders noted the need for additional programs that would keep the youth gainfully employed in order to reinforce positive relations between the communities. The visit was part of continuing Mission efforts in Rift Valley focused on reconciliation, humanitarian assistance, and implementation of the reform agenda.
RANNEBERGER